
3
Mr. *Stillman's*

S E R M O N

On the Death of his Mother.

BRITISH MUSEUM

BRITISH MUSEUM

BRITISH MUSEUM



BRITISH MUSEUM



A

3

S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

DECEASE of

Mrs. MARY STILLMAN ;

Who departed this Life, *March 17. 1768.*
in Charles-Town, South Carolina.
In the 57th Year of her Age.

Preached at *Boston, April 17.*

By her Son.

*Precious in the Sight of the Lord, is the Death of
his Saints. Psal. 116. 15.*

B O S T O N : Printed for PHILIP FREEMAN,
in Union-Street. MDCCLXVIII.

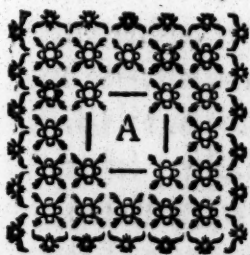




A Funeral-Sermon.

REVELATIONS XIV. 13.

And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them.



Mournful providence hath determined my choice of this passage : A providence in which I my self am chiefly concerned. God most wise and righteous, hath seen meet to remove an affectionate, and tender Mother by death !

THE gloomy tidings were received the Day past. I feel the stroke—Nature recoils, but religion teacheth to say, ALL IS WELL. And in such a case, who can help feeling, seeing the connection was near, and mutually binding ? —Yet, O my soul, dismiss every murmuring thought, and adore the hand that strikes !

THE

THE deceased ever acted a tender, a provident, and an indulgent part. While properly thoughtful of the body, and its concerns, she manifested a prevailing solicitude for the immortal soul: Making it evident to all that were about her, that *she travailed in birth again, till Christ should be formed in them.* A reflection on such repeated acts of kindness, tends to make the wound the deeper, and to increase the sense of loss in him, who feels that he has the affection of a Son.

HAD I been on the spot, it would have been expected, that I should make some improvement of the dispensation. Methinks it is no less proper, tho' so far removed from the place of her death. The parent is no less a parent, for being above a thousand miles distant, neither is the stroke the more tolerable; rather this circumstance is an aggravation. We all esteem it a felicity to be near to them we love; and are ready passionately to wish, when any such die at a distance from us, that we might have seen the last of them; and have been among the number of their friends, who took part in their affliction, and contributed all that was in their power, to make their death-bed easy. Had inclination made the disposal, this circumstance would have been prevented: But the Lord fixes the bounds of our habitation. We are not left to choose for ourselves, and it is well we are not; seeing we should follow our own way, till it would either prove our ruin, or our very great disadvantage. We have a striking instance of this in the conduct of Jonah, that disobedient

bedient prophet. In obeying the dictates of his own mind, he ran from God ; and was soon bro't to this sad dilemma, either that the mariners with him must suffer shipwreck, or he be cast into the sea. An instance this, that may lead us to reflect on our happiness, in being disposed of by an all-wise God ; and at the same time, to justify his dealings with us, even when exercised with heavy trials.

CONFIDENT that you, an affectionate people, amongst whom I esteem myself happy, will bear with me on the present occasion ; and give me a share in your prayers and sympathy, I shall go on to improve this righteous providence of God.

THE passage I have read to you, will naturally lead us to a variety of suitable reflections ; such as are calculated to give support and comfort, under the death of those relatives, who, we have reason to believe, have slept in Jesus. Therefore I shall not be called to preach altogether to myself ; inasmuch as what may be suggested from the text, will be no less suitable to you, who have lately lost near and pious relations : Yea, may be received, and treasured up against the time to come. Afflictions await us, and we know not how soon God may make a breach in our families, or among the number of our bosom-friends.

SAINT John having spoken of the rise, power, and cruelty of Antichrist, in the preceding Chap. proceeds

proceeds to foretel his destruction ; and the punishment that would be inflicted on all such as should worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in their forehead and in their hand. But with respect to those, that should endure the great sight of affliction, and maintain their integrity, in the midst of temptation and bloody persecution, he highly commends their conduct, and pronounces them blessed in death. Ver. 12, 13. *Here is the patience of the saints : Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.* q. d. In these distressing times of antichristian cruelty, their patience having been severely tried, did shine conspicuously : They chose rather to part with their lives, than to deny their master. And the text seems to be introduced with a design, to encourage such patience in tribulation, by setting before the saints a prospect of enjoying immortal blessedness, as soon as they should finish their course : *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth : Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.*—Let us attend to the following particulars,

- I. An enquiry into the import of the phrase,
dying in the Lord.
- II. A consideration of the blessedness of such ;
Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.

FIRST,

FIRST. We are to enquire into the import of the phrase, *dying in the Lord* : Which is an enquiry of importance, seeing the blessedness here predicated is confined to such.

I. SOME die, in the comforts of the Lord ; being favoured with the most lively manifestations of the love of God, and clear, and soul-reviving discoveries of that glory to be revealed. Many believers have had such realizing views of heaven, and it's ineffable felicities, by faith through the medium of eternal truth ; and the Spirit of God so sensibly witnessing with their spirits, their adoption, that they have been anxious to be gone. Death, and all it's terrors have been swallowed up, in the divine prospect of the all-surpassing glory. And from hence they have, upon the verge of Eternity, cried out like the mother of *Sisera* in another case, *Why is his chariot so long in coming ? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots ?* We have had numerous instances of these triumphant deaths ; which adorn religion, and confirm the hope of such of the children of God, who have still to submit to the like event. With what pleasure and tranquility, have some waited for their dissolution, under the growing infirmities of body ; and have often spoke of the period when they should be dissolved, with an evident satisfaction ? I have never read the letter of which the following is an extract, written by the devout Mrs. Rowe, to the Rev. Dr. Watts, without delight. After she had requested that he would look over, and prepare certain of her papers for the press, she

B

adds,

adds, " I have now done with mortal things, and
 " all to come is vast Eternity——Eternity——
 " How transporting is the sound ? As long as God
 " exists, my being, and my happiness is secure.
 " These unbounded desires which the wide crea-
 " tion cannot limit, shall be satisfied for ever. I
 " shall drink at the fountain-head of pleasure, and
 " be refreshed with the emanations of original life
 " and joy. I shall hear the voice of uncreated
 " harmony, speaking peace, and ineffable consol-
 " tion to my soul.——

" THROUGH the blood of the Lamb, I hope for
 " an entire victory over the last enemy ; and that
 " before this comes to you, I shall have reached
 " the celestial heights ; and while you are reading
 " these lines, I shall be adoring before the throne
 " of God, where faith shall be turned into vision,
 " and these languishing desires satisfied with the
 " full fruition of immortal love." * Thus lived
 that ingenious, pious christian, in the glorious
 prospect of immortality.

AND how full of divine consolation was the ex-
 cellent Mr. Hervey. On the day of his death,
 among many other things that he said, which are
 worthy of being transcribed, and repeated, he
 mentioned 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. *All things are yours,
 life and death, for ye are Christ's :* And went on in
 the following language, " Here, is the treasure
 " of a christian. Death is reckoned among this
 " inventory ; and a noble treasure it is. How
 " thankful

* Prefixed to Mrs. Rowe's devout exercises of the heart.

" thankful am I for death, as it is the passage, thro'
 " which I pass to the Lord and Giver of eternal
 " life ; and as it frees me from all this misery you
 " now see me endure, and which I am willing to
 " endure, as long as God thinks fit ; for I know,
 " He will by and by, in his own good time, dis-
 " miss me from the body. These light afflictions
 " are but for a moment, and then comes an eter-
 " nal weight of glory. O ! welcome, welcome
 " death !—Thou mayst well be reckoned among
 " the treasures of the christian, To live is Christ,
 " but to die is gain." * Thus died that man of
 God, whose praise is in the churches—Besides
 whom, we have had a cloud of witnesses. And
 whosoever understands Heb. 11. 1. *Now faith is*
the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of
things not seen ; I say, whosoever experimentally
 understands this incomparable definition of faith,
 may at once account for the christian's triumph
 over the last enemy,

BUT it is necessary to observe, that all the chil-
 dren of God do not die in the comforts of the
 Holy Ghost. We have seen some very affecting
 instances of the exemplary christian, his having the
 severest conflict, in his last illness and death. I
 have read of an eminent Divine, who had lived
 thirty odd years in the *assurance of faith* ; and not-
 withstanding he died in the dark. And let it be
 remembered, that there are many things at such
 times, that tend to fill the mind with gloominess.
 The diseases of body, of which the christian com-
 plains,

B 2

* Hervey's life.

plaints, often so affect the mind, as to hinder the wonted exertion, and exercise of its faculties : These two being so nearly connected, that in common their distresses are reciprocal.

BESIDES which, we cannot be insensible that it is the devil's last onset : And the shorter his season of tempting is, the more violent are his efforts. *The devil is come down to you*, said St. John to the church, *in great wrath, because he knoweth, he hath but a short time.* * He cannot destroy, but he will as much as possible perplex the children of God. Add to which, that the believer's comfortable living ; and surely his comfortable dying, depends upon the communication of divine love, and the vigorous exercise of faith. Now God may, yea he sometimes does, for wise reasons, suspend his gracious influences from his own children, even when on a death-bed. The Lord Jesus Christ himself, when he hung upon the cross cried, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* It becomes us to be silent, when the reasons of the divine conduct are hid from us. But, alas, how apt are we at such times to say, " Why is it thus ? " Methinks this instance of our blessed Redeemer, his being forsaken on the cross, should lead us to a mute behaviour under such a dispensation.

THE preceding remarks may correct one mistake, which seems to be generally fallen into, viz. Christians,

* Rev. 12. 12.

Christians, their almost taking it for granted, that a believer who has been eminent in life, will be no less, yea more so in death. Whereas we find that there is a variety of circumstances, either from the diseases of the body, the fiery darts of the wicked, or the suspension of divine influence, that may fill the mind with darkness ; and cause a once shining christian, to set in a cloud. But this should not suggest any suspicion of the safety of his state, seeing it has been the lot of many of the people of God, who in life, and during a course of years, had given their intimate friends, the most satisfying evidences of their acquaintance with true religion. Besides, was not Christ himself forsaken in his last minutes ? Who would offer from hence to infer, that he was not the darling of the Father ? The blessedness therefore that is spoken of in the text, is not limited to such, as are so happy as to die in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. But,

II. THEY are blessed who *die in the Lord*, i. e. in his favour. Who have their sins pardoned through the precious blood of Jesus, and their souls justified by his everlasting righteousness. Who are united to him by ties that are indissoluble : Infomuch that *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is Christ Jesus their Lord.* * And this is the case with all that are called according to his purpose. They all die in faith, and in the divine

* Rom. 8. 38, 39.

divine favour ; though they may not be able to say, *who loved me, and gave himself for me.* To be in the favour of God, is absolutely necessary to our dying *safely* ; and a persuasion that we are personally in his favour, is necessary to our dying *comfortably*. And the one may be, where the other is not. The blessedness therefore, is annexed to those persons, who die in union to Jesus, and interested in the favour of God ; though it may be their great affliction, to struggle hard with death, under the hidings of their father's face. I now proceed to the

SECOND head. Under which we are to consider the blessedness of departed saints : *Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.*

1. NOTE by what authority St. John publishes this glorious sentence ; *Yea, saith the Spirit*, the Holy Ghost, by whom holy men of God at sundry times were moved to speak : Who inspired the whole of the living oracles,

2. WE observe, that the dead in Christ are blessed from the moment of their departure out of this world. This seems plain from several scriptures : Solomon assures us, that at death the *dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.* * Our Lord said to the penitent thief, *To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* And St. Paul in several places, has satisfied us what

* Eccles. 12. 7.

what views he had of this matter : *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* * He speaks with confidence, it being no matter of conjecture, or uncertainty ; but what he, with the rest of the disciples were persuaded of, viz. That when the body should die, the soul should immediately enter into the joy of the Lord. And in his epistle to the Philippians, he declares that he was *in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ ; which is far better.* † If the Apostle had not known, that upon the dissolution of the body, he should be present with the Lord, why was he anxious to depart ? Death in itself is shocking : Nature shrinks at the prospect of it. St. Paul as a man, loved his life and enjoyments too well to wish to die, barely for the sake of being dead. And as a believer in Jesus, he loved his privileges, especially that communion he had with a God in Christ, too well to be desirous of departing, without an assurance that he should instantly pass to glory, where his joy should be full. Or as it is here expressed, *rest from his labours, and his works follow him.* This is the blessedness, that takes place, as soon as the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved. In the world believers shall have tribulation ;—but at death,

I. THEY rest from all those distresses, that result from the afflictions and death of friends and relatives. Besides that natural sympathy, which mankind

* 2 Cor. 5. 1.

† Philip. 1. 23.

mankind are generally possessed of, by which they are inclined to pity the afflicted, and as it were to bear a part of their burdens ; real believers are justly supposed, in consequence of a true acquaintance with the religion of Jesus, to possess, if I may use the expression, a more delicate sensibility : Inasmuch as his doctrines, and example mutually tend to promote it. This divine temper never shone in any one, as it did in the adorable Son of God ; and it is expected of all his followers, that the same mind, the same tempers should be in them, which were also in him. Now in whomsoever this temper prevails, it will interest him in the prosperity, or adversity of others. He will mourn with those who mourn, and rejoice with those who do rejoice. He finds himself sensibly afflicted, when his brethren suffer ; and as sensibly relieved, when they obtain deliverance.

BUT besides this more general sympathy, having formed a variety of agreeable connections in domestic life, he becomes still more attentive to their interests ; and consequently is so much more affected with their calamities. e. g. Does God lay his hand upon the wife of your bosom ? or the provident and tender husband ? Who can describe the distressing anxiety of mind on such occasions ? What fears invade the person, lest cruel death should dissolve the happy ties, break the pleasing connection, and thus deprive you of the partner of your life ; leaving you to bemoan your estate of widowhood ; after having spent many years together in that near relation ?

OR

OR are the indulgent parents, who have reared you thro' the several stages of life, from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to youth, at vast expence; who have always dealt with you in the most tender and compassionate manner; I say, are they afflicted? You feel for them, and become partakers of their affliction. Are they taken off by death? You sigh in secret, weep abundantly, and are ready to wish that it had been the will of God, to have continued them longer.

Does the Lord single out one of your tender offspring, and load him with painful sickness? No one can tell the feelings of a parent's heart, on such occasions, but he who is himself a parent. How gladly would he bear a part of the affliction, was it possible? He walks the room, watching every breath, and every pulse, while his fears suggest the most dangerous symptoms. His anxious mind continually trembles, lest death should cut down the flower. And if the event should be according to his apprehensions, we hear him, in language like that of David, bewailing the sad catastrophe—*O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.* * Thus we see, that the very connections, which make up a great part of what we call happiness in this life, often prove like so many thorns in our sides. From distresses of this nature, all are delivered at death.

C

2. THEY

* 2 Sam. 18. 33.

OR

2. THEY rest from all pains and sicknesses. The human body is exposed to a great variety of diseases, many of which are attended with the most excruciating pains. With these some of the saints have been long exercised; while others have been suddenly transmitted from earth to heaven. How glorious is such transition! One minute busy in the affairs of the world; and it may be struggling with poverty, with distress, &c. the next minute in the presence of God, and of the Lamb! But God is a Sovereign: He appoints a sudden death, and an easy passage to some; but lingering, painful sickness, to others of his own children. We have seen some continue months, under a complication of diseases, and afflicted with the acutest pains, till finally, nature being worn out, submits without a groan to the stroke of death; and thus obtains an eternal deliverance from all such distresses. Who would be so cruel as to have them back again, even if they might have it for a wish? Seeing they have endured the conflict, and finished their course, and are now admitted to the fruition of eternal life.

3. By this event, the saints are freed from all solicitude, about the fickle things of time. These they had been anxious to obtain, and were either disappointed in the pursuit, or enjoyment. They either never acquired what they had studiously sought after; or having acquired it, became convinced, that they were as far from their fancied happiness as ever. *

THESE

* I clasped the Phantoms, and I found them Air.

Night Thoughts.

THESE sorrows of the world, are now at an end. The body lies at rest in the *land of darkness, as darkness itself*, and the soul exults in the beatific vision. The body waits the summons of the last day, when the trump shall sound, and the dead in Christ rise first. Such cease to say, *What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?* Being amply, yea eternally provided for in an infinitely better state.

4. THE saints rest from all persecutions for the sake of Christ, and his divine religion; from all unkindness from those, of whom they expected better treatment; and have done for ever with all disputing about religious sentiments; and have arrived in that world, the glorious inhabitants of which, see eye to eye, and with perfect harmony unite to magnify the exceeding riches of grace.

5. DEPARTED saints have obtained that deliverance, they had long desired, from all sin. Sin now has no more being in, or power over them. Often did they on this account groan, being burdened; and in the pathetic language of St. Paul say, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* That cursed thing is entirely done away; and they have no more to do in a way of opposition to it. The combat ceaseth for ever, and they are enabled to say, *Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory!* It was a fiery conflict, and cost the saints many a sorrowful hour. Often did they complain, *when we would do good, evil is present with us.* Many times did they enter their closets to weep over their indwell-

ing corruptions, to bewail their want of conformity to the divine character, and to wrestle with God for greater spirituality: But now *their warfare is accomplished, and they have received of the Lord's hand, double for all their sins.* Oh happy conquest! blessed deliverance! What, sin no more! Never be interrupted more by that monster, which hath made all the days of their pilgrimage sorrowful! Blessed be God, he hath so ordered it, that the promised rest shall come!

6. THEY now bid defiance to the powers of darkness: Satan can tempt them no more. Tho' he cannot destroy, he will make the journey of God's people as thorny and distressing as possible. *He walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;* and his temptations are compared to *fiery darts*: With what propriety every believer knows, seeing he is not ignorant of his devices. But having passed through death, he has arrived where the wicked one the devil ceaseth from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

7. DEPARTED saints rest from all unbelief, from all fears of death, and from all doubts about their interest in Christ. These things, while they were in the body, were a constant source of discouragement. They were often led, through the weakness of faith, to stagger at the promises, to dread the last enemy, and to fear that after all they should be deceived: Ever ready to write the most bitter things against themselves. It is not uncommon for those that fear the Lord, to walk in darkness,

ness,

ness, being deprived of the light of his countenance ; which is the greatest trial they can meet with in the world. And having lost sight for a time of Jesus, his most glorious character, his personal worth and beauty, through the prevalence of unbelief, and their indwelling corruptions ; they lament in the bitter language of Job, *Behold I go forward, but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him : He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.* * At such times nothing can satisfy a real believer, but renewed discoveries of a glorious Christ ; who is to him altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand. *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*, is his prayer, *let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely !* In these expressions we observe not only warm love to an absent Redeemer, but distressing anxiety for his return.

BUT the case is altered with all those who have *died in the Lord* ; they rest from these difficulties, and all those evils that attend the present state. And we are led to observe, as an essential part of their blessedness, that they are in the actual enjoyment of all good. *And their works follow them.* By this sentence we are taught to trace them to some other state of being. They have bid adieu forever to the present scene, but have not lost their existence, nor yet sunk into a state of sleep or inactivity. They have only changed place, earth for

* Job 23. 8—10.

for heaven ; a vail of tears, for the presence of God. They have been conducted by their guardian angels to the blissful society of heaven, and are seated in yonder glory, among the spirits of just men made perfect ; among all the redeemed with the blood of Jesus. There they enjoy the company of Patriarchs, Prophets, Evangelists, and the noble army of Martyrs.—There old friends meet together ; and having taken a retrospective view of the way, in which the Lord led them in this wilderness ; the various deliverances he had wrought for them, and that abundant mercy displayed in their being made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; they unite with all the illustrious company of saints, to adore the Lamb.—Now they are without sin and sorrow ; they no more complain, *I sought him, but I found him not*, for they are in the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus, who is to them a real object of sight. They behold his glory, and are satisfied with appearing in his likeness. To them an abundant entrance has been ministred into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *their works have followed them*. It is an old, but a just remark, that their works did not go before, to give them a title to the kingdom of heaven, or to plead their admission into it : No, this unspeakable favour they receive purely on account of the merits of Christ, through whom they obtain *remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified*. * They were accepted in the Beloved, in whom all the elect of God are compleat. And upon their arrival in that world of glory,

* Acts 26. 18.

glory, they had nothing to plead as a reason of acceptance, but the perfect righteousness of Jesus. "Their works followed them when admitted," says one. "As the robe which on a King's coronation-day, flows from his shoulders, cannot but accompany him, wheresoever he goes. It may be pertinent, on the mention of this illustration, just to hint; That as it is not the robe of state that makes the King, so neither is it the practice of holiness, that makes the christian. An union with Christ, an interest in his merits, and the indwelling presence of his Spirit; *these*, and nothing short of these, constitute the true christian. Yet, as the royal robe is an attendant on Majesty, and distinguishes the Monarch; so practical godliness is inseparable from faith, and adorns the believer."

BUT after all that can be said of their happiness, it will readily be acknowledged, that we fall far short of an adequate description. We can better describe their miseries in this life, than their felicities in heaven. *Verily we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face—We know but in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.** Yet this we are assured of, that *the dead are blessed who die in the Lord*: And we are in a degree, made acquainted with the nature of that blessedness, but fully to investigate it, is impossible in our present state of sin, and ignorance. Nevertheless in this we rejoice, that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

As

* 1 Cor. 13. 9, 10, 12.

As an IMPROVEMENT of the subject, I would observe——

I. THAT these instances of mortality, should remind us of our own end. Their silent, but persuasive language, is, *Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.* It is appointed for all once to die: This event is inevitable, but the time when it shall take place, uncertain. Man's days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. This is a truth none can deny. The Fathers where are they? And the Prophets, do they live forever? No: Death visits, without distinction, the palaces of Kings, and the cottages of the poor; men of eminence, and such as are less distinguished; the aged, and the youth. Where are all the inhabitants of the first ages of the world? Alas, they have long since submitted to the stroke of death. —— What numbers have walked these streets, filled our public places, bustled through the world, under a weight of cares; carried on great business, been serviceable in their day; who are now no more in time? How many that have stately worshipped in this place; that sat on yonder seats, all attention, while the glories of the gospel, were declared; are now confined in the land of darkness? Some that from this desk, have preached unto you Jesus and the resurrection; and were once warmly engaged for God's glory, and your salvation, are now returning to dust. Death indeed hath slain his ten thousands. What means the passing bell? Why go the mourners about the streets?

streets? These are all loud calls to us, to consider our latter end. It hastens; before to-morrow's rising sun, some of us may be called to the judgment seat of Christ!—Which leads us to observe,

2. THAT it is a necessary enquiry, are we in the Lord? Have we ever been called out of darkness into marvelous light?—Ever brought to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? An important question! Death is on his way, we stand exposed every moment to an arrest: And should we be overtaken in a state of unbelief, we are gone forever. Mankind need not hesitate a moment, about their natural condition; they are dead in trespasses and sins. Having violated the divine law, they are under its curse, and dying in that state, must be damned. If such, and such only are blessed who die in the Lord, then all those who go out of the world in a state of impenitence, being without God, and without Christ, must perish under the amazing load of their own guilt. How awful is the consideration! Yet awful as it is, we have had a long experience; that in itself it is utterly insufficient to quicken dead sinners. They will not believe, though one should rise from the dead; being under the powerful influence of enmity against God, and his glorious method of salvation. May the Holy Ghost accompany the solemn truth to the sinner's conscience, and slay that native principle, which will be his everlasting ruin, if unsubdued!

3. WHAT has been delivered may tend both to support believers, under their manifold afflictions;

ons, and to remove their fears of death. The present, is a checkered state ; these are their days of mourning. Neither have they any intimation from their divine Lord, that they shall be delivered from afflictions, until they put off the body. While in the world they are never secure. It often happens, that when they have emerged from under a heavy trial, and begin to think the worst is past ; that an affliction still more grievous takes place. To-day applauded, to-morrow condemned ; one hour in affluence, the next reduced to want : One day in health, prosperous in business, and happy in the blessings of domestic life ; the next, attacked with inveterate disease, frowned upon by divine providence, in trade ; or despoiled of those very things, which in their nature, were calculated to render the calamities of life more supportable. But in the midst of all these distresses, believers may thus reflect ; This is not our rest : We have our eye fixed on the recompence of reward ; and desire that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory. Verily we know, that if we suffer, we shall also reign with him. And who can think hard of the sufferings of this present time, when he looks to that glory which shall be revealed in him ? They are not worthy to be compared with it.

AND as these glorious truths tend to support believers under present afflictions, so to remove the fears of death. Why should they fear, who are united to Jesus, and whose sins are pardoned through

through the blood of sprinkling ? The sting of death is sin. If sin be pardoned, what harm can death do to the christian ? He may dissolve the union that has long subsisted, between the soul and body ; but, glory be to God in the highest, that neither death, nor any other creature, shall ever be able to separate the soul from Christ. *They shall never perish*, said he, speaking of his people under the character of sheep, *neither shall any pluck them out of my hands*. Die they must ; but their very bodies shall be kept in safety, until the resurrection of the just. Then Christ will change these vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body.—*There is*, says an Apostle, *one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory : It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.** This is one of the very comfortable articles of the christian faith ; and greatly conducive to reconcile the mind to death. Why should the believer be afraid to commit his sickly, infirm, and perhaps, emaciated body to the tomb, when he can do it in sure and certain hope, of a glorious resurrection ?

AND as to his immortal spirit, it does, as already observed, instantly pass to glory. The partition between earth and heaven is thin ; *absent from the*
D 2 *body*

* 1 Cor. 15. 41—45.

body, and present with the Lord. Thus writes an inspired Apostle. Whereas, we too commonly speak as though the spirit upon its separation from the body, travels through immeasurable tracts of space, before it arrives at the celestial mansions. But did we strictly attend to the holy scriptures, methinks we should readily conclude, that the soul, upon the dissolution of the body, finds itself at once surrounded by myriads of perfect spirits, and in the transporting view of the ascended Saviour. Why then should the christian fear to die? Rather, why is he not with the Apostle desirous to depart, that he might be with Christ? *Austin* wished to die, that he might see that blessed head that was once crowned with thorns. If believers are not allowed to wish for death, yet they may, and it is right they should, wait with pleasing expectation for their great change, as it will dismiss them from the flesh, and its numerous incumbrances; and introduce them into the presence of God, where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore!—There they shall behold that compassionate Jesus, who once agonized in the garden, until his sweat was as it were great drops of blood.—Who was betrayed by Judas, arraigned at the bar of Pilate, and though declared to be innocent, went forth bearing his cross; and died the just for the unjust; And they shall forever sing the new song, saying, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

4. In fine, What has been said, is calculated to give support and comfort, under the death of pious relations. Have we reason to think that they died in the Lord? The Holy Ghost hath pronounced them *blessed*. Permit me to say, that this is the case in the present afflictive visitation. Has the Lord removed one so nearly related, and so high in affection, to the world of spirits? Blessed be his name, that the survivors have every satisfying evidence, that she died in the Lord. Therefore they do not sorrow as those who have no hope.

HAD I not been so nearly concerned, here I might have been permitted to say something of her character. But should it be attempted, some might judge it an impropriety; and perhaps in the warmth of filial affection, too much might be said. Yet how would it look to be silent? Tell me, what forbids a child to speak well of a venerable parent, when it may be done with the strictest regard to truth? Bear with me, I had rather be censured, than slight the memory of one of the best of Mothers. After all, it is an agreeable circumstance, that I can do it in the words of the worthy * minister of the church, of which she lived, and died a member; as delivered by him on the solemn occasion. "Much might be said
"in her favour with the greatest justice: Many
"things in her, worthy of praise and imitation
"came under my own notice. I had the pleasure
"of

* Reverend OLIVER HART, of Charles-Town, South-Carolina.

“ of an intimate acquaintance with her for more
 “ than twenty years ; during which time her con-
 “ versation was such, as became the gospel of
 “ Christ : And prior to the commencement of
 “ our acquaintance, she had several years been
 “ a warm, zealous, and exemplary professor
 “ of religion. So that although she often la-
 “ mented her having lived too many years in
 “ vanity, she was converted to God in the very
 “ prime of life ; and which she spent to good
 “ purposes. She had naturally a great flow of
 “ spirits, and much vivacity of temper : Which
 “ being by grace properly regulated, and kept
 “ under due restraint, made her appear with a
 “ brighter lustre in the christian life. Her be-
 “ haviour was lively, but not light ; chearful, but
 “ not vain.—She maintained a close communion
 “ with God ; was often engaged in her closet,
 “ and constant in her attendance on the word and
 “ ordinances of the gospel. Out of the abun-
 “ dance of her heart, her mouth frequently spake
 “ of divine things ; and which she did in a way
 “ suitable to the cases of those with whom she
 “ conversed.—The poor and distressed by various
 “ methods, she would help and relieve : And ever
 “ manifested a singular regard for the ministers
 “ of the gospel.—In social and domestic life,
 “ she was an affectionate wife, a tender parent, a
 “ kind mistress, and a sincere friend : An *Israélite*
 “ *indeed, in whom was no guile.* Her last and fatal
 “ illness, was both tedious and painful ; which she
 “ supported with much patience, and resignation ;
 “ until nature being entirely exhausted, sunk under
 “ the

“the weight : And she sweetly slept in Jesus.”—
 And give me leave to subjoin, that she always ad-
 mired the astonishing riches of grace ; and that
 love of God that passeth knowledge. And did
 invariably, from her real acquaintance with the
 gospel, subscribe the language of St. Paul to the
 Philippians ; *Yea doubtless, and I count all things*
but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ
Jesus my Lord :—And do count them but dung that I
may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having
mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that
which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness
*which is of God by faith. **

In such case, my Brethren, how great must the
 loss of surviving relatives be ? But infinitely greater
 the gain of them, who have thus walked with
 God, and died in faith. May all of us be follow-
 ers of them, who through faith and patience in-
 herit the promises. Even so Lord Jesus !

* Philip. 3. 8, 9.

A M E N.

